

**Sunday April 26, 2020**

I love this gospel lesson; it's called the road to Emmaus. And it only appears in the gospel of Luke. The traditional symbol of Luke is the Ox. And I like to think of the Ox as big, slow and powerful. For me that pretty much sums up the whole gospel of Luke. Big, slow and powerful...

Can you imagine these two people, the text calls them disciples, walking away from Jerusalem after a very perplexing and disappointing week? They knew Jesus was a mighty prophet, and they had high hopes that Jesus would redeem Israel. But it was the chief priests and other leaders who conspired to have him killed.

Then there was a report that some women had a vision he had risen from the dead, but when others went to investigate, they didn't see anything.

These two people are walking and talking, and when Jesus joins them, they don't recognize him. The text says that they stopped, "They stood still, looking sad." I can image that! Probably a little like how we are feeling during this pandemic. We're all trying to readjust our hopes and dreams. Wondering what's realistic or possible, or for how long... So, we walk together, slowly and sadly.

And the way this gospel story is told, we can imagine the journey took a long time. Jesus explained the scriptures to them, "beginning with Moses and all the prophets..." Jesus talked, they listened, and they continued in their slow and sad walk.

When they arrived at the village where they were going, it was late, they invited Jesus to stay with them. They were at the table together, Jesus took the bread, blessed and broke it, and suddenly, their eyes were opened, they recognized Jesus and he vanished.

In an instant, their world changed. That slow sad walk away from Jerusalem, turned into all-out sprint to get back. They wanted to share the good news; they had seen Jesus...

Quick story... Kris and I met during freshman orientation week at North Park College, which is in Chicago. After the first year I transferred to the University of Minnesota, and Kris stayed in Chicago. We were crazy in love and that whole sophomore year we spent a lot of time driving back and forth, between Minneapolis and Chicago. The power of love seems to manifest presence...

One day I wanted to surprise Kris and I drove to Chicago without letting her know. My brother lived near the college at the time, so I always had a place to stay. When I got to North Park, it was late and I was disappointed to learn she and a bunch of friends had taken the train downtown.

Well, there were no cell phones in those days... I had no idea when she would be back... The train station was only about four blocks away, so I decided to walk there and wait.

After a couple blocks, I saw a group of women walking toward me on the sidewalk. It was dark, but I knew it was Kris and her friends, I recognized their voices. I continued to walk toward them and just watched. Suddenly, Kris stopped in her tracks... she took one hard, long look, she screamed and ran to me, practically knocking me over in a hug.

There was a moment, when she saw me, but she had to overcome her doubt. And when she did, it was a huge wonderful surprise! And, so it was for the disciples...

This morning I'd like to do some reflecting about that moment when everything changed. The moment between when they didn't recognize Jesus, and the moment when they did. It was kind of like a light bulb went on.

And what's interesting to me about this moment, is that these disciples saw Jesus because they were open to the possibility. They saw Jesus in the blessing and the breaking of bread. And they knew it was Jesus, because that's what Jesus did. In the miracles of feeding the five thousand, and the four thousand, and again in the last supper. This is my body given for you... A complete self-giving, of his body... Love manifests presence...

And suddenly, everything changed! What was previously impossible, was now completely possible. Jesus had risen from the dead, and that changed everything! This is monumental... Resurrection is a completely different way of seeing the world. It is a lens that changes everything. Death has been defeated. Life in all its glory, is God's promise. Completely surprising!

And just as Jesus is raised from the dead, we also experience resurrection in our lives, here and now... As Jesus breaks bread and blesses it, Jesus feeds us in many different ways.

It's in the love we have for one another. It's in the graciousness we extend to one another. It's in the forgiveness we offer one another; in the reconciliation of broken relationships. It's in the

healing of those who are sick and the wholeness of those who are dying. It's in the faith of all the Saints who have gone before us.

It's in all the ways we connect, support and include one another. It's in the generosity of opening our hearts to share with one another. It's in the ministries of both churches, all these things give witness to resurrection. All these things are gifts and they shower down upon us all the time.

Have you seen these things? This is a new lens for seeing the world. We are people of hope and resurrection... This is a new kind of eternal life breaking into reality. And by noticing these things, we insist that the Kingdom comes here on earth as it is in heaven.

Can you see Jesus in all this love? Can you recognize him?

Our God is God of the living, now and forever.

Amen...